

EXHIBIT F - DECLARATION 10



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Councilmember Sawant and South Asian Community Leaders Introduce First-in-the-Nation Legislation To Ban Caste Discrimination

January 24, 2023 By [Jesse Franz](#)

“... My office is proud to bring forward [first-in-the-nation legislation](#) for our city to ban caste-based discrimination, in solidarity with our South Asian and other immigrant community members, and all working people. With over 167,000 people from South Asia living in Washington, largely concentrated in the Greater Seattle area, the region must address caste discrimination, and not allow it to remain invisible and unaddressed.”

Councilmember Kshama Sawant (District 3, Central Seattle), chair of the Sustainability and Renters’ Rights Committee, released the following statement:

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“Caste discrimination doesn’t only take place in other countries. It is faced by South Asian American and other immigrant working people in their workplaces, including in the tech sector, in Seattle and in cities around the country. That’s why my office is proud to bring forward [first-in-the-nation legislation](#) for our city to ban caste-based discrimination, in solidarity with our South Asian and other immigrant community members, and all working people.

“With over 167,000 people from South Asia living in Washington, largely concentrated in the Greater Seattle area, the region must address caste discrimination, and not allow it to remain invisible and unaddressed.

“If approved by the City Council, the legislation will ban caste-based discrimination in our city. The legislation will prohibit businesses from discriminating based on caste with respect to hiring, tenure, promotion, workplace conditions, or wages. It will ban discrimination based on caste in places of public accommodation, such as hotels, public transportation, public restrooms, or retail establishments. The law will also prohibit housing discrimination based on caste in rental housing leases, property sales, and mortgage loans.

“We know that caste discrimination has been growing in the United States across many industries, including technology, construction, restaurants and the service industry, and in domestic work. Caste discrimination is increasingly a grave contributor to workplace discrimination and bias—data from [Equality Labs](#) show that one in four caste-oppressed people faced physical and verbal assault, one in three faced education discrimination, and two in three (sixty seven percent) faced workplace discrimination.

“In August of last year, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing won an appeals court ruling to proceed with a lawsuit alleging that a caste-oppressed engineer at Cisco Systems—a multibillion-dollar tech conglomerate—was actively targeted by his dominant-caste managers, and denied professional opportunities, a raise, and promotions because of his caste background. In their report published July 14, 2020, [The New York Times](#) wrote that the “**technology giant got away with ignoring the persistent caste discrimination because American laws don’t yet recognize caste discrimination as a valid form of exclusion,**” allowing companies to operate “in willful ignorance of the terrifying realities of caste.”

“**Seattle is one of the cities where caste discrimination “remains a largely hidden and unreported issue,**” as noted in a recent [article](#) in Real Change. The article quotes a spokesperson from the City of Seattle Office of Civil Rights, who wrote that “Caste Status is not a recognized protected class in the City of Seattle and if our office were to receive a complaint based solely on caste discrimination, we would not be able to investigate it...”

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This is exactly why City Council Democrats must vote 'Yes' on the legislation from my office.

"If Seattle City Council Democrats vote 'Yes' on this legislation, the City of Seattle will join the [NAACP](#), the [Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance \(APALA\)](#), [AFL-CIO](#), the [California State University system](#) (the largest four-year public university system in the United States), and Brandeis University in banning caste discrimination. The Alphabet Workers Union has said that the "fight for the civil rights of caste-oppressed people is a workers' fight." If the City Council supports our bill, Seattle will become the first city in the nation to outlaw caste discrimination!"

Councilmember Sawant drafted the legislation **alongside South Asian community leaders, who celebrated its introduction:**

Thenmozhi Sounderarajan of [Equality Labs](#) commented, "Equality Labs is proud to join Councilmember Kshama Sawant and Seattle citizens in this historic ordinance to add caste as a protected category to its non-discrimination policy. As a national Dalit civil rights organization that has worked with many institutions around the country to add caste as a protected category, this act is the necessary first step to ensure the rights of all Seattle citizens. Caste is a feminist, queer, and workers' rights issue, and the time has come to ensure that discrimination, bias, and worker exploitation on the basis of caste is not only illegal, but will be properly enforced throughout the city."

Shahira Kaur from [Equality Labs](#) said, "Through the proposed ordinance making caste discrimination illegal, Seattle is taking the lead in a historical battle for caste equity and is ensuring that the necessary protections are in place for caste-oppressed Americans. As a caste-oppressed woman, I am ecstatic about this, and would urge the City Council to vote for it!"

Anil Wagde of the [Ambedkar International Center](#) stated, "I am excited about the caste ordinance sponsored by Kshama Sawant in the Seattle City Council and urge the Democrats in the Council to support it. The cancer of caste is very much present in the U.S. and the ordinance will provide much-needed teeth for the victims of caste discrimination to confront the perpetrators of caste violence. It will also play a big role in paving the way for future nationwide legislation."

Maya Kamble from the [Ambedkar Association of North America](#) said, "I am excited that Seattle City Council is willing to take this historic step to recognize caste as a protected status. With growing numbers of South Asians in the USA, the number of caste atrocities are

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growing, too. So, adding caste as a protected category is the need of the hour and a welcome step for caste oppressed communities”

Karthik of the Ambedkar King Study Circle commented, “Legal protection is the only means to guard the vulnerable from caste exploitation in places where dominant castes have privilege and preponderance. The Seattle city ordinance sponsored by Kshama Sawant to outlaw caste discrimination will set a strong precedent for the rest of the United States. I urge the City Council to pass the legislation.”

Councilmember Sawant added the following comments:

“Caste is a system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, endogamy (completely closed categories), and social barriers based on birth and descent. Caste discrimination occurs in the form of social segregation, economic deprivation, physical and psychological abuse, and violence. Caste discrimination is also manifested in employment, education, and housing.

“The fight for this legislation is also linked to the larger working-class fight against the ongoing brutal layoffs in the tech sector. The billionaire and multimillionaire shareholders and executives of corporations like Google, Amazon, and Microsoft have made billions of dollars in profit since the pandemic began, and now they are once again shoving the burden of the capitalist recession on working people, by laying off tens of thousands of tech workers. Socialist Alternative and my office stand in solidarity with tech workers who want to get organized to fight back, including rank-and-file members of the Alphabet Workers Union (Alphabet is the parent company of Google).

“The Black Lives Matter movement and the protests against the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* have reminded us of how endemic various types of oppression are under capitalism, but also showed that the majority of working and young people want to fight for a better society.

“The struggle against racial and gender oppression in Seattle and all across America needs to be linked with the fight against all oppression, and against economic exploitation of the majority of working people.

“The history of American capitalism reveals how racism against Black people was systematically developed by the elite to justify the institution of slavery, which was an eye-popping source of profits for the wealthy plantation owners. The elite needed to manufacture bigotry and utterly false ideas about the inferiority of Black people in order to force society to stomach the unspeakable horrors of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. This also helped the bosses keep white workers and indentured servants in poverty and indebtedness by

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starkly dividing up sections of the working class and the exploited, while they (the bosses) made off with most of the wealth that workers' labor produced.

“Similarly, the caste system was consciously and systematically developed by the ruling classes in South Asia and other parts of the world for thousands of years, in order to exploit the mass of ordinary people by using divide-and-conquer strategy. This meant that those who were forced into the lowest castes were the most cruelly exploited and subjected to untold violence. Later, the caste system was used by British imperialism in colonial nations to divide and rule, and since independence has been used in the same manner by the present-day ruling classes in the respective colonial nations.

“Just as racism is not the result of an “inevitable” racial friction between white and Black people, caste oppression has also been maintained by the class structure of capitalist society in South Asia and now in the United States.

“Beyond winning reforms such as this one, working people in our city, nationally, and internationally need to unite and build mass movements to fight for a socialist society. Because as long as an exploitative and rapacious system like capitalism exists, oppression will be endemic. The only way to end caste, racial, gender, and other oppressions is for the working class to fight for a different kind of world.”

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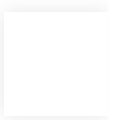
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